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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 24 January 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. KHAN

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Third periodic report of Denmark (CEDAW/C/DEN/3)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Galamba and Ms. Jakobsen (Denmark) took places at the Committee table.

2. Ms. GALAMBA (Denmark) said that the third periodic report had been translated into Danish, as had the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and published by Danish women's organizations. The fourth periodic report had already been submitted.

3. Since the first Danish report, understanding of gender equality had evolved from a question of establishing adequate legislation to bringing about a change in attitudes through communication. The focus had changed from eradication of discrimination to the acknowledgement of women as indispensable partners in economic and social development on equal terms with men. Gender equality, at first a women's issue only, now reflected a broader desire to establish a positive atmosphere of cooperation between women and men in order to attain a just and fair society where all were treated equally.

4. Action subsequent to the preparation of the third periodic report had concentrated on the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. Specifically, the Government had established an ad hoc committee to suggest priorities and consult institutions in other countries to learn from their experience. The Equal Status Council was monitoring implementation of the Platform in government institutions. The Council operated a consultancy service for the labour market in the public and private sectors. A report on the Fourth World Conference, together with the Platform for Action, had also been published.

5. In addition, since May 1995 county authorities had been required to report on gender equality issues among their employees. Supplementary child-care payments had been introduced at the county level in the hope of promoting participation by young women in political work.

6. There was a proposal in Parliament on conditions of service of female recruits in the army. Changes in family law had been adopted relating to shared custody and improved visiting rights for unmarried fathers.

7. New parental leave provisions had been adopted in 1993, but few men took advantage of them. Accordingly, the Government was exploring ways to motivate more men to use parental leave schemes with the aim of creating equal child-care and career opportunities for both parents. Maternity leave on full pay - recently extended to female workers in the agricultural and pre-school sectors - would be an important issue in the coming months for those groups without such an entitlement.

8. Responding to questions raised by the members of the Committee (CEDAW/C/1997/CRP.1/Add.2), she said that Denmark had implemented European Union directives relating to gender equality. The directive on parental leave had not yet been implemented, however, since it had only recently been adopted, the free movement of workers within the European Union created a need for coordination in the pursuit of equal opportunities. Nonetheless, the changes introduced by the Maastricht Treaty had not required the introduction of new initiatives on equal rights in Denmark.

9. The report by the Equal Status Council on government action for equality in the public sector had concluded that equality had been established. Nevertheless, the Council had recommended the continuation of action plans to better reconcile family and working life and promote more balanced gender representation at senior levels, to study management culture from a gender perspective, to increase mobility through time-limited high-level appointments, to conduct research into parental leave, to provide for locally negotiated additional pay, to establish a national mainstreaming project and to improve the representation of women in research and industry, especially at senior levels.

10. Regarding Equality Committees in government ministries, the current tendency was to deal with equality issues in a liaison committee; the exact forum varied from ministry to ministry. Equality committees had been seen only as a temporary means of promoting equality. The Equal Status Council report was due to be considered by Parliament in the spring of 1997.

11. The acts on equality of men and women in appointing members of public committees and civil service provided that the composition of management should reflect a balance between men and women. Periodic reports were submitted to the Prime Minister's Office. Women occupied 28 per cent of all public committee positions.

12. There were 29 equality advisers in regional employment offices, which was considered to be enough. The Equal Status Council had recommended the establishment of equality advisers in education and research.

13. The 1953 Constitution, which embodied the principle of equal treatment of men and women, together with various laws enacted since then, imposed a duty on the private as well as public sector to ensure respect for equality.

14. Regarding the position of women in Greenland, she said that the Convention was being translated into Greenlandic and would be debated in the Greenland Parliament. The Greenland Equality Committee emphasized discrimination issues through general debate in the media. No other legislative action had so far been taken to improve the status of women in Greenland.

15. New legislation providing for equal treatment of men and women had been introduced in the Faeroes Islands, similar to legislation in other Nordic countries.

16. A special adviser for international equality affairs had been appointed in December 1991, and in 1994 a separate department for international equality affairs had been established. Primary responsibilities were coordination on gender issues with the United Nations and other international organizations,

gender policy in Danish development aid and gender training in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

17. Affirmative action measures could be taken to promote gender balance, but there was no automatic preferential treatment of women. Decisions were taken as part of an overall planning for equality. A job training course established by the Public Employment Service in 1995 for unemployed women had now been extended to men, although two thirds of the participants were still women. The Equal Status Council supported similar courses at the regional level. One current initiative, aimed at unemployed women over 50 years of age, provided training in new technology and elementary subjects.

18. Gender-based violence endangered women's health and was not accepted. Information programmes had been chosen as the most effective preventive measure, under the aegis of the Council for the Prevention of Crime. Publications had been distributed.

19. While there was no special legislation on domestic violence, the relevant issues were covered under the Danish Criminal Code, and new steps were in preparation. Crisis-centre shelters were available for women who were victims of domestic violence; immigrant women were also received at them, and did not have separate shelters.

20. The incidence of rape was decreasing significantly as a result of changing attitudes, particularly among younger males. The increased incidence in the 1970s and 1980s seemed to be attributable to higher reporting.

21. No specific courts were assigned to deal with domestic violence. The number of women going to crisis centres was increasing, a development that was being monitored closely. Initiatives on behalf of women prostitutes and other groups suffering abuse were being undertaken by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Statistics relating to domestic violence were inadequate, and the number of cases was probably under-reported.

22. There were no specific programmes to sensitize police, judges and judicial officers to violence against women, although public awareness programmes had been carried out. The freedom of the press was guaranteed in the Constitution. It could thus not be used as an instrument for specific issues. Nevertheless the media did address the problem of violence against women.

23. Incest was forbidden under the Criminal Code, and the incidence reported had fallen from 124 cases (boys and girls) in 1991, to 55 cases in 1995, as a result of more intensive scrutiny by the authorities.

24. While non-governmental organizations were not able to act on behalf of the victims of violence and sexual abuse in criminal and civil actions, they provided information concerning procedure and help through lawyers.

25. The Government was very concerned to promote the integration and rights of immigrant women and had put forward proposals to improve the situation of immigrant women who were victims of domestic violence. Currently there was no provision to prevent victims whose relationships had ended from being deported. In that regard the Government was considering changes in the regulations

governing residence permits. Action was also being taken to promote the integration of foreign women in Denmark, including elimination of job market barriers and improved access to social services.

26. Legislation on the status of refugees covered persecution on the basis of gender with regard to such acts as circumcision. The Government saw no need to change the law. There had been no application for refugee status on the ground of gender persecution.

27. The Equal Status Council had initiated a project to shed light on the relationship between working life and family life. Public day-care facilities were available throughout the country under the responsibility of local authorities. Parents with small children were entitled to their normal salary on the first day of a child's illness, and parents employed in the public sector were entitled to child-care days. Pursuant to a European Union directive, pregnant women were now entitled to paid leave in connection with prenatal examinations.

28. Increasing use was being made of flexible working hours to harmonize family and working life. Part-time jobs were widespread in Denmark, with employees having the same rights as full-time employees, but on a prorated basis. Employees wishing to take a break from their working life for family reasons had various opportunities for parental leave. In 1995 almost 53,000 parents, 90 per cent of them women, had been granted leave for child care. The Government was considering ways to encourage fathers to make use of such provisions.

29. Victims of violence and sexual abuse had a right to medical and psychological assistance, although resources for psychological treatment were often insufficient. Difficulties could arise in cases of rape if the perpetrator was not prosecuted, since the victim could then not receive psychological assistance. Denmark had distributed resources to local councils to subsidize up to 12 psychological treatment sessions for victims of various crimes including sexual assault; the programme covered treatments for delayed psychological reactions as well.

30. Prostitution was not illegal per se in Denmark, but luring any person into prostitution and living on the earnings of prostitution were punishable offences under the Criminal Code. No sanitary or health measures were specifically reserved for prostitutes, although special contact centres had been set up for them. Generally speaking, Danish society viewed prostitution as a social problem rather than morally condemning it. While private organizations primarily offered support to female prostitutes, there was a need for more research in the field, and the Ministry of Social Affairs had set up an experimental centre to provide support for female and male prostitutes and to collect information about prostitution. Prostitution was practised by both women and men; the specific sexual percentage were unknown, but women constituted the majority. No statistical data on prostitution were available, but it was assumed that the number of foreigners involved had increased, that mainly African and Asian nationalities were represented and that women from Greenland did not constitute the largest group among prostitutes. Some research was being done on ways to ensure greater participation by prostitutes in the social welfare system, and research had also indicated that health problems,

including the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), were not widespread among prostitutes.

31. No specific data existed on violence against or rape of prostitutes; female prostitutes were protected in the same way as other women from violence and sexual assault. Police and judges did not appear to have any specific attitudes toward female prostitute victims of violence. While trafficking in women was not specifically a criminal offence, it could be considered smuggling of persons under the Danish Alien Act, or pimping or fraud under the Criminal Code. Attention to the issue had recently increased in Denmark, but police investigations had rarely resulted in formal charges against those accused in such cases.

32. Awareness of the phenomenon of "sex tourism" had also recently increased, but no legal basis yet existed to prosecute Danish nationals involved in the sexual abuse of minors abroad. There were no measures specifically designed to protect "mail-order brides"; they were protected by the same rules as other foreign women.

33. Following parliamentary elections in 1994, roughly one third of the ministers in the national Government were women, with similar overall representation in Parliament. After a recent government reorganization, one quarter of the ministers were women. Some progress had been made in women's election to local governments as well, with their current representational share standing at roughly one third overall. Women had been appointed to only 9.5 per cent of the highest political posts, however. Recent amendments to government procedures at the country level, such as a stipend for mothers with young children, were expected to encourage more women to participate in political work. Debate continued on gender quotas for candidates of political parties, with some parties participating and others withdrawing from the system. Nearly half the Danish representatives to the European Parliament were women, however, as was the Danish representative to the European Commission.

34. Non-governmental organizations were involved in setting the official equal-status agenda concerning women in decision-making, and in implementing Government equal-opportunity policies. Several such organizations were represented on the boards of the main equality institutions, where they acted both as watchdogs of public initiatives and as active participants in the process. Most information concerning women in decision-making was disseminated by political parties and non-governmental organizations.

35. Many associations and groups were working with gender issues: the Danish National Council of Women and the Danish Women's Society were most actively involved in influencing the appointment of women to public committees and encouraging and preparing them to participate in politics, as well as to assume decision-making positions in the public and private sectors. The Danish Government had most recently allocated DKr 400,000 to the National Council of Women, which also received a share of the state football pool receipts amounting to roughly DKr 500,000. Other non-governmental organizations received financial support from various funds. To qualify for Government support, such organizations had to be working for equality between women and men.

36. The results of a limited pilot study conducted by the National Association of Local Authorities to identify barriers to equality in local government indicated, inter alia, that male politicians' idea of equality meant that one third of those serving in Government were women, that younger women would be more attracted to political work if it were less time-consuming and that women were more likely than men to engaged in unpaid work. Another study conducted among managers in municipalities revealed differences of priority and difficulties of communication among male and female managers and that criteria for success in those organizations were based on male standards of value.

37. Ms. JAKOBSEN (Denmark) said that women still had difficulty moving to the highest levels in the national administration and public service. However, in the previous five years a substantial number of women had been newly employed as managers in municipalities and in the public sector at the local level. There were still very few women at the top levels of management in the central Government organs, although some divisions and ministries had shown an increase in the number of women in positions of responsibility at the upper levels. Factors explaining the low participation of women in top management in the public sector included the relatively short history of women's participation in the system overall, their exclusion by men in the male-dominated culture and their own lack of self-confidence in their leadership capabilities.

38. While more women had recently been applying for and getting middle and upper-level positions in the State administration, special measures were also being taken in ministries and public institutions in order to help them break through the "glass ceiling" to top management. Such measures included special courses and management training, and appointment and recruitment procedures more inclusive of women. Moreover, a variety of courses and conferences were being offered to prepare and motivate women for managerial jobs. Nevertheless, more needed to be done to break down the tendency of women to be excluded or to exclude themselves from consideration for leading positions.

39. Women were more numerous in decision-making posts in such sectors as education, social affairs, culture and health but were far less numerous in sectors dealing with the economy, technology and the natural sciences. That pattern was repeated at the local level as well. In order to encourage women to choose from a broader range of educational and career opportunities, measures had been taken to include subjects traditionally considered more female-oriented in the general curriculum. More support was also being offered by women's groups to female managers in male-oriented sectors in order to cultivate mentors and positive role models for younger women.

40. The Ministry of Justice had a relatively high proportion of female managers compared with other ministries, especially at the higher levels. In 1995, women accounted for 23.7 per cent of judges in the courts of justice and 44.7 per cent of the lower-level judges; two of the 14 judges on the Supreme Court were women, and 44.5 per cent of the prosecutors were women. Those figures reflected a steady increase in the number of women in the judiciary. Moreover, the majority of students admitted to legal studies in Danish universities were women, and more of those women chose to become judicial assistants, and therefore eventually judges, than chose to become barristers after graduation.

41. A total of 217 women, of whom 153 were soldiers, had been involved in peacekeeping in the Balkans and other areas of conflict. Following the completion of the study of women pilots and stress, the Ministry of Defence abandoned the last exclusion of women from the defence forces by allowing them to apply for fighter-pilot positions. The number of female bishops in the National Evangelical Lutheran Church had risen from zero in 1993 to two in 1996, out of a total of 12, while the number of female rural deans in the Church had risen from three in 1993 to 10 in 1996, out of a total of 109.

42. Danish women were showing enough interest in joining the Foreign Service so that measures to encourage female candidates were not necessary. Women represented 27 per cent of the Danish diplomatic corps, although they occupied only 5 per cent of its management positions. Women were employed in all types of positions in the major personnel categories and predominated at the Executive Officer level. No information was available from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the number of Danish citizens of either gender employed in intergovernmental, international or regional bodies and organizations.

43. Ms. GALAMBA (Denmark) said that slightly less than half of the 69,771 children born in Denmark in 1995 were born outside marriage; the number born outside marriage to non-Danish women was unknown. A child born within marriage between a non-Danish woman and a Danish man (or between a Danish woman and a non-Danish man) obtained Danish citizenship at birth. A child who had not acquired Danish citizenship by birth or by the parents' subsequent marriage was subject to the legal status of the person having parental custody. The child could therefore obtain an independent residence permit when so entitled by virtue of the length of his or her stay in Denmark. A non-Danish child from any foreign country who was formally adopted by a Danish married couple acquired Danish citizenship once the parents had made a statement to the relevant authorities before that child turned seven years old. Until the child obtained Danish citizenship, he or she was granted a residence permit under the relevant section of the Aliens Act.

44. With regard to the vulnerability of immigrant women to expulsion, she said that permanent residence permits could be revoked during the first three years of the holder's legal residence in Denmark if the grounds that led to the granting of the permit no longer obtained or if the permit were found to have been obtained by fraud. If an immigrant woman (or man) obtained a residence permit for the purpose of marriage to a permanent resident of Denmark, that permit could be revoked if the marriage or cohabitation ended during the first three years. The regulations of the Aliens Act made no distinction between the sexes; hence immigrant and refugee men and women had the same legal status in that respect.

45. The Danish Parliament had completed a National Action Plan to improve conditions for women's studies in 1992. The associated evaluation report recommended that the Plan should be followed up and called for the systematic collection of statistics on gender distribution at institutions of higher education. Three of the five Danish universities had subsequently made it possible to include women's and gender-specific studies modules in their Bachelor of Arts curricula, and such studies had also come to be included in open university programmes for people working full- or part-time. Specific courses in women's and gender research were offered in all Danish universities

and women's centres, and the first Danish Ph.D. programme in such studies had been set up in 1994. Moreover, studies were under way regarding the eventual establishment of full bachelor or graduate-level university programmes in women's and gender research, as well as of an elective subject on "Gender and culture" at the high school level. No other specific women's studies/gender research programmes were available at other levels of education, but information on equality questions had been mainstreamed in the various curricula.

46. In the educational sector, girls accounted for 57 per cent of upper secondary students, but the majority of those enrolled in vocational training programmes were boys. Since 1981, the proportion of women enrolled in institutions of higher learning had risen from 39 per cent to 47 per cent. In some fields, such as health education and the humanities, women outnumbered men. Much still remained to be done, however, to break down sex-segregated education choices and the Government had stressed that primary schools had a specific responsibility to prepare both girls and boys for a broader choice of education and jobs.

47. Women filled only 17 per cent of the academic posts in higher education, mainly in temporary positions and in the areas of the humanities and medicine. The Equal Status Council had therefore called upon the Ministry of Education to require universities and other institutions of higher learning to draw up action plans to create equal opportunities for women and to integrate women's studies into the research system. Some of the Council's recommendations had been implemented by the Ministry of Education, and in recent years the number of female doctoral students had been increasing.

48. On the subject of gender equality, she said that over the years it had become clear that equality had to be integrated into teaching from the very beginning and in all fields of education. Recent legislation on primary schooling contained specific reference to the concept of "equity". Equal opportunities and equity were also part of the objectives and curricula of secondary schools. While human rights education was not an obligatory part of the national curriculum, the concept of the equal worth of human beings was among the basic values taught at the primary school level.

49. The inquiry by the Council on Research Policy had found that, in 1990, only 17 per cent of the assistant, associate and full professors at all Danish institutions of higher education were women, although there were substantial institutional variations to that picture. The profile of faculty in higher education was part of the sex-segregated job market in Denmark. The mechanisms of gender differentiation involved were similar to those found in many other countries.

50. Turning to the questions posed under article 11 of the Convention concerning the elimination of discrimination against women in the field of employment, she reported that there was no difference in the unemployment allowance available to men and women, and unemployed women did not receive any special additional support.

51. With regard to the training of women workers, she noted that adult vocational schemes had been tailored to the needs of specific categories of participants, including unemployed women. The one-year job training course, in

particular, sought to provide participants, most of whom were women, with skills required for employment in the industrial sector. The Public Employment Service also arranged courses in such areas as retail trade, in which large numbers of women were employed.

52. The wage gap between male and female workers remained a serious problem. A number of initiatives had been taken by the Government and by non-governmental organizations to reduce the disparity from its current level of 25 per cent. The Equal Status Council, for example, had published information on gender and wages and had organized a conference on the gap between the pensions of men and women. The main strategy had been to coordinate the action being taken in all fields by the public employment system and to supplement it with special projects aimed at setting new goals and developing new tools to be used in the effort to achieve equal opportunities.

53. As for the length of the work week, the period had not been shortened since the submission of Denmark's third periodic report and remained at 37 hours. Flexible working hours agreed on individually between employers and employees were increasingly utilized as a means of promoting family life. Tests had also been initiated in some public institutions and private enterprises on distance or home work, but it was too early to say whether such arrangements would be advantageous to the parties concerned. Most Government ministries in Denmark had introduced flexible working hours, and the Ministry of Finance was currently preparing a project on distance work.

54. There was still no written definition in European Union or national legislation of the concept of equal pay for work of equal value. The Ministry of Labour, in liaison with the Equal Status Council, had launched a project on equal remuneration, aimed at developing wage statistics and identifying the factors that caused differences in wages. The results of that project were not yet available.

55. Even though the rate of participation of Danish women in the workforce was very high, gender segregation still prevailed in the job market. It had proven to be very difficult to change women's attitudes and attract them to those vocations traditionally dominated by men. The Equal Status Council had issued a publication that focused on men and women in jobs normally occupied by the other sex and was planning a conference in May 1997 targeted at the private sector and focusing on men and their employment culture.

56. The number of women in part-time jobs had been falling in recent years, with older women and women under the age of 20 accounting for most of that number.

57. While the Equal Opportunities Act did not specifically address the issue of sexual harassment, such harassment was covered by the prohibition against sex discrimination in working conditions. Where complaints of sexual harassment were alleged, the burden of proof on the plaintiff was not very heavy.

58. In 1993, the proportion of fathers on parental leave was 9.7 per cent, and the Equal Status Council had recently launched a project with financial support from the Ministry of Labour to improve the rate of use by men of existing leave schemes. In that connection, the Minister of Employment had declared her

willingness to establish temporary special measures to encourage fathers to make greater use of such arrangements. Figures revealed that Danish men reacted positively to the notion of shared family responsibilities. Since 1964, the number of men who helped with household chores had increased fourfold. Denmark was a party to Convention 156 of the International Labour Organization.

59. In order to ensure harmony between working life and family life, the law provided that public day-care facilities should be made available for children all over the country, and the Danish Parliament had enacted legislation to ensure that local authorities had the flexibility to create programmes for such facilities.

60. With regard to women's participation in business, statistics were not available on top managers of companies in the private job market. Available figures showed, however, that Danish women did not participate in decision-making in the private sector to the same degree as men, although a considerable increase in the number of women in middle-management positions had been noted. The State had the highest and the private sector the lowest percentage of women managers. Indeed, only 1 per cent of the members of the boards of directors of the 100 largest companies in Denmark were women. Increasingly, however, women were establishing their own businesses, which ad a survival rate nearly as high as that for businesses owned by men. The Danish Technological Institute offered training and scholarships to women entrepreneurs and inventors.

61. The problem of the negative attitudes of both men and women to women's holding of managerial posts in companies was being addressed through public debate and research aimed at changing attitudes in the workplace. The Equal Status Council, for example, had initiated three different studies on gender differences in management, and newspaper articles pointed to the fact that women had some resources which were different from those of men. Women's organizations, in particular, had been very active in putting the subject on the public agenda.

62. Ms. JAKOBSEN said that, with regard to budgetary allocations to programmes to promote gender equality, the Equal Opportunities Unit had at its disposal a yearly allocation which enabled it to coordinate the activities of regional employment offices and to initiate a number of special projects. It was not possible, however, to determine the total cost of such programmes.

63. The need to train girls and women in new technologies had been given a high priority within the education system. The number of men pursuing science and technology courses far outstripped that of women. A new approach to science and technology was therefore being introduced at the primary level to stimulate the interest of girls in that field at an earlier age. The Ministry of Research had also issued several publications about the future "information society" in order to highlight the subject.

64. As for the policies and laws relating to the right to work of immigrants and refugees, the principle of equality between men and women before the law also applied to the provisions relating to immigrants and refugees. Refugees holding residence permits received the same social security benefits as Danish citizens. Moreover, under bilateral social security agreements between Denmark and a number of countries, persons who completed a period of gainful employment

in Denmark could be granted a social pension during their residence in the other contracting State.

65. Legislation had been enacted which prohibited the dismissal of pregnant women and mothers or fathers on leave related to childbirth or adoption. The burden of proof lay with the employer, and it was well known among employers that such cases were difficult for them to win. The relevant legislation had been amended in 1994 following the issuance by the European Union of a directive on pregnancy, and it currently prescribed that mothers should stay at home for two weeks after delivery. Furthermore, pregnant employees had been given the right to be absent from work if their medical examinations took place during working hours.

66. The number of men and women participating in sport was nearly the same, even though the types of sporting activity differed. For example, more than 25 per cent of boys, compared to only 8 per cent of girls, played soccer.

67. As for the share of Government expenditures devoted to the health sector, the figure was 8 per cent in 1995. An annual amount of DKr 700,000 was used to provide information about reproductive and sexual health services. Since 1995, the National Board of Health had undertaken a series of non-traditional information projects on contraception, abortion and pregnancy, especially targeted at young people. The problem of unwanted pregnancies had also been discussed at a conference for county representatives and other interested parties. National health expenditure was not divided into male and female health activities, and gender-disaggregated figures were therefore not available.

68. With regard to research into women's health, men and women were used as subjects of research on the same basis. The Government's annual budget, however, contained no direct allocations to medical or pharmaceutical research, which was funded by various public and private agencies. No statistics on the amounts spent on pharmaceutical research on women's health were available.

69. The major cause of death for women was heart disease, followed by cerebrovascular disease and malignant neoplasms. The health debate in Denmark focused on the relationship between lifestyle and mortality. Certain widely held beliefs about that relationship, however, could not be confirmed by research.

70. Women immigrants and refugees were entitled to Danish health care benefits and enjoyed the same rights as Danish women.

71. The main methods of contraception used in Denmark were pills and condoms. In 1993, about 20 per cent of women were using pills, while 13.1 million condoms had been sold in the country in 1992. The number of users of intra-uterine devices had been declining steadily since 1984. In 1992, about 4,429 women and 1,722 men had been sterilized. Currently, the Ministry of Health was considering a set of guidelines on the hygiene of contraception. A committee had been established to look at issues such as tests for pregnant women, the ultrasound test, and pregnancy and the environment. In that connection, since smoking among Danish mothers contributed significantly to higher infant mortality rates in Denmark than in other countries, the National Board of Health

had focused in 1995 on information activities specifically targeting pregnant women, while relevant documentation on the dangers of smoking was provided to medical practitioners, midwives and other health personnel in close contact with pregnant women.

72. As far as medically associated reproduction was concerned, the main method used was in vitro fertilization through egg implantation, micro-insemination and egg donation. Sixty per cent of such operations were carried out by the public health services, the rest being done in private clinics. In 1994, 700 children had been born as a result of in vitro fertilization treatment, representing about 1 per cent of the total number of children born in Denmark in that year. No figures were available on the ratio of resources allocated to contraception, abortion and sterilization in comparison to allocation for infertility treatment.

73. Ms. GALAMBA (Denmark) said that girls had access to contraceptive methods and abortion under the law on contraception. Although girls under the age of 18 required parental consent, those who were married did not need such consent. Schools had an obligation to inform pupils about contraception.

74. In 1994, it had been estimated that 1,274 out of 30,563 deaths had been caused by breast cancer. Four hundred twenty-three deaths had been caused by cancer of the uterus. Access to publicly funded mammograms was free in Denmark.

75. Twenty-eight women had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in 1995, of whom seven had died. In 1995, 15 per cent of the total number of people infected with HIV had been women, as compared to 14 per cent in 1993. Her Government was undertaking wide-ranging measures to raise public awareness about sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. The Ministry of Health had spent DKr 400,000 on a publication called "Young" to provide information on the subject to schools. About DKr 1 million had been spent on advertisements in 1996, and DKr 2 million had been allocated to a major project in 1997 targeting teenagers between 15 and 19 years.

76. Students in the health-care field were educated in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. A special subject focusing on the issue especially the physiological and mental problems connected with the disease, had been included in the nursing school curriculum. The Ministry of Health was planning two intensive days of information in 1997 to brief all key players on the need to focus on HIV/AIDS campaigns.

77. With respect to the incidence of substance abuse among women, statistics showed that 25 per cent of all persons who had been addicted to drugs in 1996 were women, and that 20 to 25 per cent of those who had died as a result had also been women. According to a pilot project carried out in Copenhagen, 25.7 per cent of 258 drug addicts had been women; 12.5 per cent of them were 18 to 20 years old, 12.5 per cent were 21 to 23, 32.1 per cent were 24 to 29 and 42.9 per cent were over 30. The national health services provided a special treatment programme for pregnant women who were drug addicts. In 1993, 25 per cent of all those who had died from alcohol abuse were women, and 33 per cent of female alcoholics were under treatment.

78. There seemed to be no need to grant special loans or assistance to women who wished to open businesses. Women enjoyed the same rights as men as far as support from the Government was concerned. In 1996, a Committee had been established under the Ministry of Trade to consider the issue of granting loans in general for those wishing to open businesses, and women had been well-represented at that Committee's meetings.

79. As Denmark was a small country, there was no need for special health services for women in the rural areas. They enjoyed the same right to health services and assistance to victims of violence as other citizens.

80. In 1995, 34,970 couples had been married in Denmark, and 13,036 couples had divorced in the same year. There were no statistics on non-marital partnerships, although it was estimated that about 5,000 to 6,000 such partnerships ended in separation. The rights of non-married couples differed from those of married couples, particularly with respect to inheritance, which was not automatic but had to be secured through a will. Moreover, unlike marriages where a community-property system existed between man and wife unless separation of property was agreed, and alimony was given upon dissolution, the dissolution of a non-marital partnership depended entirely upon agreements between the two parties, without any State intervention or guarantees. Also, non-married couples did not automatically obtain the same shared custody rights of children as married couples did upon the dissolution of their partnership. The Government had not introduced any special programmes to benefit single persons since 1991, when the concept of family had been changed to include single persons.

81. Danish legislation did not differentiate between fathers and mothers seeking custody of their children. Fathers in Denmark did challenge mothers for custody. The legal basis was the Danish Act of Custody and Visiting Rights. When a relationship broke down, the legal guardian had the right to decide where the child would live including the possibility of settling in foreign country. In a case of shared custody, it was illegal for either the father or the mother to settle in a foreign country with the child without the consent of the other party. In either case, visiting rights were permitted.

82. Concerning the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women in March 1996, her Government had established a committee to consider changes in the organization of work towards gender equality. In April 1996, the Parliament had encouraged the Government to present a full report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at the 1997-1998 session, and to mainstream the gender perspective in administrative, political and planning activities at both the national and the international levels.

83. The Ministry of Labour had initiated a pilot project on mainstreaming of the gender perspective in job market legislation. The aim of the National Labour Market authority was to incorporate the work that had been done on gender equality and to give it higher visibility. Gender perspectives were therefore included in planning and reporting. In the public employment service, gender equality was a specific field of activity.

84. Ms. ARAYA said that Denmark had amply demonstrated its commitment to the advancement of women by responding adequately to all 96 questions posed by the

Committee. She also wished to thank the Government of Denmark for the material assistance it had provided to her country, Ghana, for the advancement of women, namely, the provision of mammograms to all regional hospitals, the collaboration of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) in ensuring that 80 per cent of Ghana's rural areas had safe drinking water and the personal involvement of Denmark's Ambassador to Ghana in the campaign to stamp out the traditional religious practice of Trocosi, which led to the enslavement of girls and women.

85. She was deeply disturbed to learn that, even though many developing countries used Denmark as a role model in their struggle to accelerate women's de facto equality through the use of affirmative action, two Danish political parties were considering withdrawing the quotas for women. She wondered whether the representatives of Denmark could tell the Committee what factors had led those parties to take such a decision.

86. Ms. CORTI welcomed Denmark's holistic approach to gender equality, which was in conformity with the Convention. However, she was surprised that there was no special legislation on domestic violence. In that connection, while she welcomed the fact that the health risk as a result of violence had been selected as a priority, it would have been preferable to give priority to the bodily integrity of victims before considering health issues relating to such violence. Although freedom of the press should be preserved, the media should be encouraged to become more involved in helping organizations dealing with issues of domestic violence to promote awareness among the public at large.

87. The increase in the portion of the health budget allocated to reproductive health services was also a very positive development. It was encouraging to note that immigrant and refugee women received health benefits. She wished to know what changes had been made in traditional information programmes on contraception.

88. Ms. SATO asked why many pregnant women had been dismissed in spite of the Equal Opportunities Act, and whether there were any other measures to protect pregnant women from dismissal.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.